

Ethical Use of Technology

Ethical use of technology is becoming a fast growing issue now that the internet is readily available to anyone in the palm of their hands. A large amount of the issue of ethical use of technology comes from people not having the correct knowledge of what is right or wrong. I do believe that many people make mistakes of ethical technology use with no ill intentions but nonetheless it is causing problems.

The difference between ethical and unethical use of technology is determined by how it is used by the user. When a student is researching a topic, are they giving credit to the person(s) who developed the information? "As students learn to use the internet to locate reliable information, they must be required to cite their sources" (Armstrong & Warlick, 2004). As a teacher, explaining this to students is very important because if you were the one who discovered something amazing then you would want to make sure that you get the credit that you deserve. Students need to understand that by not citing sources it is the same as cheating on a test. Properly educating students in the classroom to cite sources is a simple task and now there are even programs that will do it for them, one that I am using now on Word 2007.

Just as students can plagiarize work already created, software can be illegally copied by student use. Software that is created all over the world can be found for "free" on several pirated sites all over the internet. I put the free in quotations since many who find pirated software do not think of the penalties of being caught with pirated software. By teaching students what is right or wrong is another responsibility that teachers need to make, since we cannot rely on most parents to do that at home. This is a task that can be taught also at an early age, "elementary-age children, particularly between the ages of nine and 12, are learning to evaluate their actions and to understand abstract concepts, says Dr, Marvin Berkowitz, PhD, a behavioral development expert at St. Louis University." (Kruger, 2003).

Younger students may not be aware of all the morals and issues that adults are aware of but by teaching them right and wrong we will have them prepared for the cyber future they will grow up in.

Teachers and administrators also need to be taught the correct ethical use of technology in the classroom. Once again, I feel that a majority of the issues with sharing software is done with no ill intentions at all. A teacher is searching the internet and finds a program that they want to use so they download it. It ends up working out well so they tell their fellow coworkers and share the software that they are not allowed to do. Professional development could help the understanding of ethical use in the classroom. If teachers are to be teaching others how to use technology correctly, shouldn't they know the rules as well? "*The State of K-12 Cyberethics, Cybersafety and Cybersecurity Curriculum in the U.S. Survey* found that more than three quarters of U.S. teachers have spent fewer than six hours on any type of professional development education" (Intern, 2010). It would be a wise idea to consider the professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to be properly trained so that they may properly train the students who are applying the technology in the classroom.

Ethics is a major issue in the cyber world that we are now living in. Students are constantly being exposed to an infinite amount of information and we need to make sure that they know how to use the information correctly. Pirated software is also becoming an issue but open source software could assist with this issue. Students can find the appropriate free software and avoid the possible penalties of obtaining illegal software.

References:

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